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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002189

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND EB/OIA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [EINV](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [JO](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM, TIP, AMCIT  
CASES WITH JUSTICE MINISTER

REF: ANKARA 1838

Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: In an April 14 meeting with Justice Minister Cicek, the Ambassador praised GOT human rights reforms and encouraged further progress in the run-up to the December EU Summit. He recommended the Embassy and GOT establish a regular exchange of information on trafficking in persons (TIP). He also urged a speedy, fair resolution of legal proceedings in two cases involving Amcits: the Bedoian investment case and the Corapcioglu child custody dispute. Cicek said the GOT plans to adopt a package of 10-15 constitutional amendments in May, including the abolition of the State Security Courts (SSCs) and the removal of National Security Council (NSC) nominees from the broadcasting and higher education boards. The GOT is eager to enhance international cooperation and share information with allies on TIP. He said he would check on the status of the Bedoian case; the Corapcioglu case should be completed shortly. He also said the GOT is concerned about reports that Jordan is sheltering members of the Uzan family, wanted in Turkey for bank fraud. End Summary.

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Constitutional Amendments in the Works  
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2. (SBU) The Ambassador congratulated Cicek for the progress the GOT has made on human rights reform. He noted the recent court ruling convicting four police in the Altinbas death-in-detention case (reftel). For any country, trials involving police defendants are among the toughest challenges for the judiciary. There have been press reports of a new package of constitutional amendments, including the abolishment of the SSCs. Any new reforms, in addition to implementation of previous reforms, could prove crucial at the December EU Summit, when the EU will decide whether to set a date to begin accession negotiations with Turkey. Cicek confirmed that the GOT is preparing a package of 10-15 constitutional amendments. They will include measures stressing gender equality and freedom of the press. There are plans to abolish the SSCs; however, GOT officials are not discussing this issue publicly because there are a number of major cases currently being tried in SSCs, and they don't want court authorities to slacken their pace. Once the SSCs are closed, the SSC caseload, which includes terrorism, will be handled by the heavy penal courts. There are also plans to remove NSC nominees from civilian boards such as the High Board of Radio and Television (RTUK) and the Higher Education Council (YOK), as demanded by the EU. The GOT plans to adopt the constitutional amendments, as well as the corresponding legal reforms, in May.

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Regular Data on TIP Needed  
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3. (U) The Ambassador thanked Cicek for his efforts to combat TIP, and for providing Embassy with data on TIP-related arrests and prosecutions. It would be helpful if the Justice Ministry could provide the Embassy with such data on a regular basis throughout the year. The Ambassador also said he would be grateful if Cicek would raise TIP in his public statements, as a way to emphasize the importance of the issue to judges and prosecutors. Cicek said the GOT is concerned about the trafficking problem in Turkey. Organized crime and terrorist organizations are using human trafficking as a way to raise money for their operations. TIP is a global issue; the GOT has made some progress in enhancing its cooperation with other countries to combat TIP, but would like to do much more. Along those lines, he fully supports sharing information with the Embassy. Cicek said he will raise TIP

next week when he addresses chief prosecutors at a conference in Antalya.

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Corapcioglu Child Abduction Case  
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14. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that an appeals court recently ruled in favor of the Amcit mother in the Corapcioglu child abduction case. However, the father filed an appeal to the decision. Given the appeals court ruling in the mother's favor, would it be possible for the mother to take custody of the child and return to the U.S. while the legal process continues? Cicek said the current appeal is only a request for a "correction" of the previous decision. Such requests are normally handled quickly.

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Cicek: Islamic World Lacks "Democratic Infrastructure"  
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15. (U) The Ambassador said he was impressed by Cicek's speech at the Istanbul conference on Islamic Democracy. Cicek said a major effort is required to bring democracy to Islamic countries. There is currently no cultural infrastructure to support democracy in much of the Islamic world. Many Islamic countries still operate under an ancient clan system incompatible with democracy. In some countries, people interpret Islam in a way that makes them intolerant. It is difficult, for example, for followers of Shia and Wahabi Islam to adopt democracy, because their religious beliefs prevent them from living peacefully with people who are different from them. This is not true for Turkey, which long ago chose democracy, he asserted. The goal for Turkey now is to improve the existing democratic system.

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Bedoian Case  
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16. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that one of his top goals has been to find ways to attract more U.S. investment to Turkey. One of the obstacles has been the problems faced by a number of U.S. investors. One such case involves Amcits Victor and Kristy Bedoian, who, along with others, invested about USD 750,000 to renovate a hotel in Van in 2001. They have faced a number of legal problems, and currently their residency and operating permits are being contested in administrative court. The quick, fair resolution of the case would provide a good example of an improved investment climate in the country. Cicek said he is not familiar with the case, but promised to look into it. Foreign investment is important for Turkey, and a well-functioning judiciary gives confidence to foreign investors. He said he has spent his entire political career fighting the kinds of corruption that scare away foreign investment.

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Uzan Family  
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17. (U) Cicek said the GOT is concerned about reports that some members of the Uzan family, wanted for bank fraud, are hiding in Jordan. If true, then Jordan is protecting them. Noting that Jordan has issued passports to some family members, he said the GOT is aware of the Uzans' "special relationship" with Jordan, dating back to a childhood friendship between a member of the family and King Abdullah. The GOT has not been able to confirm whether Jordan has followed through on Abdullah's promise to revoke the passports. The Ambassador noted that we are looking for any of the Uzans Turkey seeks who might be hiding in the U.S., but none have been found.

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